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C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 006298

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: BDG ASSURES THAT BIG ANTI-AHMADIYA EVENT WILL BE PEACEFUL

Classified By: A/DCM D.C. McCullough, reasons para 1.4 b,d.

1. (SBU) On September 30, the anti-Ahmadiya group International Khatme Nabuwat Movement Bangladesh (IKNMB) reiterated their demand that the BDG declare Ahmadiyas to be non-Muslims. If the government does not meet their demands by December 22, they threatened, IKNMB would take over all the Ahmadiya compounds in the country, starting with the local headquarters in Old Dhaka, on Friday December 23.

2. (U) On December 15, leaders of the Ahmadiya community told poloff that they are convinced that the BDG could stop the anti-Ahmadiya campaign at any time, but because of the BNP alliance with the two Islamic parties, they refuse to actively protect the Ahmadiya's constitutional rights. Although JMB has not attacked or threatened the Ahmadiyas directly, their recent bombing campaigns added to the Ahmadiya community's sense of vulnerability, they said.

3. (C) On December 20, Charge brought up the threatened December 23 action against the Ahmadiyas with Home Affairs Minister of State Lutfuzzaman Babar. MHA Babar assured Charge, he is aware of the issue and will ensure that there is no violence.

4. (SBU) Police contacts have reinforced to us Babar's message. Additional officers have already been posted to the central compound and other Ahmadiya mosques. If necessary, members of the Bangladesh Rifles are available for back-up. While security forces will allow the IKNMB to stage a rally in the downtown area, no marchers or protesters will be allowed near Ahmadiya sites. A select group of leaders may present the Ahmadiyas with a list of demands, but will not be permitted to post the usual signs on the compound which tell "true" Muslims not to mistake Ahmadiya houses of worship for mosques.

5. (C) COMMENT: On the defensive over JMB attacks and sensitive to international interest in the Ahmadiyas, the BDG seems set to once again stop IKNMB from doing anything too embarrassing or too violent on December 23.

CHAMMAS